



GREENSBORO URBAN AREA
Metropolitan Planning Organization

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of October 30, 2002
3:00 p.m. Greensboro, NC
Plaza Level Conference Room
Melvin Municipal Office Building
(Greensboro City Hall)

TAC MEMBERS PRESENT

Sandy Carmany	TAC Chair
Bob Landreth	Guilford County Commission
Doug Galyon	NC Board of Transportation
Mary Rakestraw	Guilford County Commission
Don Vaughan	Greensboro City Council
Robbie Perkins	Greensboro City Council

ATTENDANCE

Scott Walston	NCDOT – SWP	Adam Snipes	NCDOT – SWP
Jerry Dudeck	NCDOT – SWP	Jeff Sovich	GDOT
Scott Rhine	PART	Mike Mills	NCDOT Division 7
Tyler Meyer	GDOT	Richard Atkins	Wilbur Smith Associates
Adam Fischer	GDOT	Tom Martin	Greensboro Planning Department
Paul Muschick	<i>News & Record</i>		

Sandy Carmany called the meeting to order at 3:07 p.m.

Action Items

1. Approval of Minutes of September 18, 2002

Don Vaughan moved for the approval of the September 18, 2002 minutes. Bob Landreth seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes as prepared.

Business Items

1. Airport Area Transportation Study

(Note: This business item was listed as fourth on the published agenda, but was promoted to first in order to accommodate presenters' time constraints.)

Scott Rhine advised the Committee that the study has been narrowed down from fifteen alternatives to four and that a public drop-in meeting would be held on November 14, 2003 regarding this study. Sandy Carmany stated she would be unable to attend the November 14 meeting and hoped that another TAC member could attend. Scott Rhine also stated that the meeting notification is being sent out by PART and each MPO is running ads for the meeting along with each city chamber of commerce. The notice will also be available on public access television. At the meeting, the same handouts will be available to the public, along with larger aerial maps so residents can see how their property may be affected. Once the locally preferred alternative is chosen, collector streets could then be determined.

Scott Walston illustrated each alternative to the Committee. Each alternative allows for the construction of I-73 to be built in the future. Alternatives 2 and 4 give precedence to the the primary traffic movement, which is from Business 40 to the northern Urban Loop, while alternatives 1 and 3 give precedence to the subordinate traffic movement, which is from northern Winston-Salem to the airport. The study documents that would be presented at the public meeting are not yet final, as some changes would need to be made to the alternatives. Doug Galyon asked if the study incorporates the widening of 421 and 68 from Colfax. Scott Walston explained that these projects have already been incorporated by inclusion in the cities' long-range transportation plans.

Scott Rhine advised the Committee that Forsyth County has noted an interest in particular routes being multi-modal in nature. Separate feasibility studies would need to be conducted once the final alternative is selected. Sandy Carmany advised that at the Division 7 public meeting, Rockingham County's two highest priorities in their TIP were the NC 68 / US 220 connector and the eastern Urban Loop, from US 29 to US 70 because they want improved access to the airport and I-40 / I-85. Tyler Meyer stated that the TAC will have a crucial role in this study process, because it is responsible for adopting the transportation plan that would include the selected alternative.

Robbie Perkins commented that this study presents the potential for the Triad to have an area of technology-industry development similar to the RTP. The central location and convenient multi-modal access of this area makes it a natural target for economic development efforts. He recommended that the airport connector needs to be as far north as possible, to maximize the amount of land between, and accessible by, the two interstates. He also suggested that the mayors of the three cities, Greensboro, Winston-Salem, and High Point, coordinate on an initiative to add a component of economic development to this transportation plan, to ensure that the Triad capitalizes on this prime opportunity.

2. MTIP Development

Jeff Sovich stated that the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program establishes the funding and implementation schedules for the MPO's transportation projects. The program of projects shown in the MTIP is developed by the MPO, based on the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program prepared by NCDOT. The STIP which was released for public review in early June of 2002. The MPO develops the MTIP cooperatively with NCDOT, and the TAC then adopts the final document. In order

for the MTIP to take affect, it must then be adopted by the Board of Transportation and incorporated into the STIP. NCDOT held a public meeting in Burlington on October 23 at which Highway Division 7 received public comments on the draft STIP. Steps in the MTIP development process completed to date include: the development of priority needs in the fall of 2001, priority needs public review meeting in December of 2001, priority session with NCDOT in February 2002, draft STIP released for public review in June of 2002 and Division 7 public meeting in October of 2002.

The approximate timeline for upcoming steps in the MTIP development process is: preparation of a draft MTIP document in November of 2002; public meeting on the draft MTIP on December 10, 2002; draft MTIP public comment period from December 2002 to January 2003; draft MTIP review session with NCDOT in January 2003; adoption of the final MTIP by the TAC in April of 2003; and adoption of the STIP by the BOT in June 2003, with the MTIP/STIP taking effect October 1, 2003.

Although it was initially anticipated that the MTIP development process would entail a new conformity determination due to changes in the schedules of regionally significant projects, staff have since determined that this will not be the case. Notwithstanding, Greensboro's next conformity determination must utilize the latest planning assumptions, as required by federal regulations. The new conformity determination will necessitate updating the input data for the current travel model, which should be performed by the three MPOs and PART. A cost-effective method for this update has been devised by staff in coordination with the consulting firm Martin Alexiou Bryson, that will meet the federal requirement for latest planning assumptions, improve ridership projections for PART's Major Investment Study and improve the accuracy of conformity analysis results.

Other policy issues related to MTIP development include: keeping key projects on schedule, maintaining GTA's funding support, and exercising STP-DA obligation authority in support of MPO area transportation needs.

3. Urban Loop Update

Mike Mills advised the Committee that the section of the Urban Loop from I-40 to Bryan Boulevard has been accelerated and will be completed in early 2003. The I-85 bypass, extending from I-40 / I-85 east of Greensboro to I-85 west of Holden Road, is scheduled to be completed in late 2003. It appears at present that the drawdowns by the Governor and legislature from the State Highway Trust will not result in delays to the section of the Loop from High Point Road to I-40. However it seems clear that if such large diversions recur next year, major project delays will result.

4. Eastern Guilford Track Separation Study

Richard Atkins advised that the railroad grade crossing study would review 23 public railroad crossings in eastern Guilford County. The study will evaluate improvement options for each crossing, including such features as signalization upgrades, pavement marking upgrades, new grade separations, re-alignment of crossing roadways, and closure of crossings. The study will also identify locations where new at-grade crossings may be needed. At the conclusion of this study safety, mobility, and economic development would be improved throughout the corridor. This study is being conducted because the area has shifted from being a rural area to an urban one. Population density is increasing in the study area, as are rail speeds. The NCDOT rail division plans on making a major investment in rail safety improvements over the next few years, as a result of the additional federal funds that have been made available to facilitate the higher speed trains. The first public meetings regarding the study will be scheduled for January, while and confomity efforts are coordinated. The Strategy must be developed the

completion date is tentatively set for the summer of 2003. The Rail Division and Consultant Team will work with the MPO on the development of this study. Concurrent to this study, the consulting firm Gannett-Fleming is analyzing private railroad crossings.

5. MPO Boundary, Structure, and Governance Report

Tyler Meyer advised the Committee that the MPOs are created and regulated under federal law, which sets forth the requirements under which the MPOs operate. The release of the 2000 decennial census data brings about the need for additional review and reporting by the MPO, although these are not new requirements. Section 136-16-200 of NC General Statutes (formerly HB 1288), which was enacted in 1999 establishes a series of factors that MPOs should consider, creates reporting requirements, and requires development of a regional conformity strategy.

The MPO must review its Metropolitan Area Boundary, but is not required to make any amendments. However, one change, proposed in conjunction with High Point, would revise the mutual boundary between the Greensboro and High Point metropolitan areas. This amendment would need to be adopted by both TACs and approved by the BOT and FHWA. A draft map was reviewed.

The MPO must also review and consider adjustments to the urbanized area boundary. The purpose of adjusting the boundary is to achieve greater uniformity in federal roadway classification among those sections of road classified as urban, and those classified as rural. After the review is examined by statewide planning, the final version will be available for review at a subsequent meeting. A draft map was shown.

The MPO is also required to review the composition of the TAC to ensure adequate representation of operators of public transportation systems. In this area the major operators are GTA, PART, and the Airport Authority. It has been established that they are sufficiently represented by the current TAC composition.

Finally, the MPO must examine the issue of regional coordination. Some relevant questions in this inquiry are: Do neighboring MPOs work well together? Can regional arrangements be improved? Is there a desire to consolidate or federate? In addition to these items, multiple MPOs within a single air quality non-attainment area must also develop a regional strategy for attaining air quality conformity. The regional TAC meeting that was held early in the month with Janet D'Ignazio addressed these issues and more. This meeting resulted in a recognition of the Triad's superior regional planning accomplishments, and an expressed desire among attendees to formalize existing regional arrangements as well as emerging functions for PART. The next steps will include convening a committee of TCC chairs to develop a report on the best way to accomplish this by December of 2002. This committee will also review the potential pros and cons of the federation and consolidation options. The TAC would then review the TCC chair findings in early 2003. In reference to the single conformity strategy, Scott Walston strongly advised the MPO to seek a common conformity schedule with other Triad MPOs.

6. Other Strategic Reports

Jeff Sovich advised that work began in August on the thoroughfare plan. The initial timeline anticipated adoption by February of 2003. However, in order to incorporate results of the airport area transportation study and to allow for the additional time that may be needed to complete this project, the thoroughfare plan timeline has been revised to show adoption by mid-year 2003.

Adam Fischer advised the Committee regarding the Hornaday Road Feasibility Study, which was created to facilitate movement in the Chimney Rock Road area. The study has been completed and meetings have been held with property owners. An alignment and an environmental screening of the area have also been completed. GDOT is working with NCDOT on how to build and fund the project and move forward with it. The NCDOT has agreed to fund the bridge, and the city would fund the roadway out of the 2000 road package bond fund. Mike Mills stated that a meeting would be held to further discuss coordination of the project.

Adam Fischer also advised the Committee regarding the Fleming-Lewiston-Horsepen Feasibility Study. Two public meetings have been held and an acceptable alignment between Horsepen Creek Road and Fleming Road has been developed. The next step will be to have the engineering division begin designing the project. This facility would extend Fleming Road north, which would eventually tie in with the Urban Loop.

Other Items

1. Board Member Update

None.

2. Town Update Opportunity

None.

3. Regional Update

Mike Mills advised that at least three lanes of the section of I-40 from High Point Road to Guilford College Road would be open soon. The remaining lanes will be open by December.

4. Wrap-Up Items

Sandy Carmany advised that the Enhancement Advisory Council has completed their meetings. The group will meet again on November 14th, and the Board will make the final decision.

Doug Galyon advised that Phase II of the Multi-Modal Transportation Center would begin in February of 2003 and would take approximately one year to complete.

The TAC adjourned at 4:40 p.m.